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CRAIG HICKMAN 2018-08-04

JAMES LOVELOCK: DOOM IS INEVITABLE, HAVE A HAPPY LIFE!

DOCUMENTATION CLIMATE CHANGE, GAIA, GLOBAL WARMING

Lovelock believes global warming is now irreversible, and that nothing can prevent large parts of the planet becoming too hot to inhabit, or sinking underwater, resulting in mass migration, famine and epidemics. Britain is going to become a lifeboat for refugees from mainland Europe, so instead of wasting our time on wind turbines we need to start planning how to survive. To Lovelock, the logic is clear. The sustainability brigade are insane to think we can save ourselves by going back to nature; our only chance of survival will come not from less technology, but more. Global warming has passed the tipping point, and catastrophe is unstoppable:

"It's just too late for it," he says. "Perhaps if we'd gone along routes like that in 1967, it might have helped. But we don't have time. All these standard green things, like sustainable development, I think these are just words that mean nothing. I get an awful lot of people coming to me saying you can't say that, because it gives us nothing to do. I say on the contrary, it gives us an immense amount to do. Just not the kinds of things you want to do."

He dismisses eco ideas briskly, one by one. "Carbon offsetting? I wouldn't dream of it. It's just a joke. To pay money to plant trees, to think you're offsetting the carbon? You're probably making matters worse. You're far better off giving to the charity Cool Earth, which gives the money to the native peoples to not take down their forests."

Do he and his wife try to limit the number of flights they take? "No we don't. Because we can't." And recycling, he adds, is "almost certainly a waste of time and energy", while having a "green lifestyle" amounts to little more than "ostentatious grand gestures". He distrusts the notion of ethical consumption. "Because always, in the end, it turns out to be a scam … or if it wasn't one in the beginning, it becomes one."

This is all delivered with an air of benign wonder at the intractable stupidity of people. "I see it with everybody. People just want to go on doing what they're doing. They want business as usual. They say, 'Oh yes, there's going to be a problem up ahead,' but they don't want to change anything."

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